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During 2013 the Ministry of Education carried out several reform-oriented events and made significant steps ahead regarding transparency provision in education system, application of modern management model, quality assurance, and capacity building from the capability and competence standpoint.

One of the steps was enabling more than 90 thousand graduates from XI class to get attestation. According to the President's instruction, proposal of the Ministry of Education on awarding attestations to all pupils of secondary schools was raised up to the Government level and legislation acts were appropriately modified in accordance with the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated on May 23, 2013.

Hundreds of school graduates who got 2 in final exams achieved successful results in entrance exams this year and were accepted to high and secondary special education establishments.

Along with high and secondary special schools, considering those persons' chance to be accepted to first vocational special education establishments, we'll see that social activities of those young have been enhanced enough.

One of the updates in 2013 education environment of the country was the adoption of new regulations on untimely acceptance of special talented children under 6 years-old to school. As a result of activity of the committees establishment in accordance with the new regulations, 8 846 children have been untimely accepted to school.

This year there has been agility in teachers' centralized employment process to general education and first vocational special education establishments. Previous years just test exams for teachers' employment took 6-7 weeks; this year the process took totally 13 days. Note that this year 3286 vacancies have been advertised. There were 18782 applicants. As per final results of competition for teachers' employment, 1281 persons were employed in general. Unlike previous years, although the number of vacancies for teachers' employment increased in the current year, admission scores were not decreased; teachers' professional competencies were a must in the competition.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education made additional inclusions to vacancies at general education schools in November. Persons who achieved admission scores in current year employment competition, but not accepted were participating in additional inclusion. 165 persons out of 1257 applicants in this stage were employed.

4022150 copies of textbooks and textbook sets were published and distributed in 146 items for classes I, II, IV, V, VI, VIII, IX and X for 2013-2014 academic years. For the first time the textbooks for class VI were compiled based on curriculum. Other textbooks were published by making editions on previous publications.

Unlike previous years, the Ministry of Education made a decision on use of general education school textbooks in the upcoming years with a year testing period. This approach will help to improve the textbook quality, decrease textbook shortage, and actively include the author potential in textbook compilation. As the first step towards this field, the annual preparation of textbooks for two classes was started. The preparation process of new textbook sets for classes VII and VIII was started based on 2014-2015 academic years. Textbook sets for class VII will be published until the beginning of next academic year and distributed to general education schools. It's planned to publish the textbooks for classes VIII in limited number, test in pilot schools a year and distribute to all schools afterwards. This mechanism is planned to be continued in the upcoming years as well. In order to improve the qualification of textbook authors and promote the specialists of authorship claims in textbook compilation, training courses are planned.

One of this year's successes was the selection process of deserving candidates for the "State Program for study of Azerbaijani youth abroad for 2007-2015". For the first time during 6 years of the program implementation, the candidates were interviewed completely transparent in study languages by the committees in which members of high education establishments, ministries, non-government organizations included and unbiased selection was made. In comparison with the previous years, this

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year more number of students – 787 entitled to study abroad.

Also, this year the Ministry of Education started the implementation of a social Modern Azerbaijan Professionals Project directed towards the development of infrastructure of first vocational special education establishments and based on state-business partnership. The Project aims to enhance the scope of vocational education system and improve the quality of capacity preparation process. Within this Project the partnerships were made with different state and private, as well as foreign partners and modern resource centers were established within several first vocational special education establishments.

Feeding has started to be centrally organized at boarding schools, lyceums and gymnasiums subordinated to the Ministry of Education. Appropriate dietary menus have been prepared for special boarding schools (children with intellectual and physical disabilities, tuberculosis, and rheumatism disease) subordinated to the Ministry. Menus have been modified individually in compliance with nosological form, progress, degree, remission or relapse periods of diseases. Additionally, at the mentioned educational centers the feeding is organized considering the age groups, characteristics of intellectual and physical load of children and teenagers, course and work routines. Central organization of feeding aims to have control over following the international and national standards, sanitary – hygienic and sanitary – epidemiologic requirements and effectively eliminate any shortages. Rational and balanced feeding is one of the necessary and effective factors providing children's health and harmonious development. Correct feeding significantly affects the development and formation of children's brain, intellect, central nervous system. Correct feeding in childhood and teenager periods provides the comprehensive development along with providing the daily needs of food.

Within 2013-2014 academic years modern equipment were provided to 370 physics, chemistry and biology subject labs at 240 general education establishments republic wide, as well as 27 in Baku city. This action has been implemented by appropriate allocations from state budget by the order of the Ministry of Education.

Temporary Guideline has been adopted for interschool assessment at general education schools and "Teacher's formative assessment notebook" been prepared.

The Ministry of Education organized a project competition for the public initiatives support. As a result of the competition, 13 projects for "Initiatives for education policy", 5 for "Research initiatives in education", in general, 18 projects have been positively evaluated.

One of the following successful attempts in 2013 was the organization of trainings for school principals and pedagogical personnel who wish to work in this position in future. The trainings in the inception phase cover general education establishments operating only in Baku city. 547 pedagogical personnel have been registered. 547 candidates who wish to take part in the trainings shall be undergone through 3-stage competition. The first stage of competition has already been completed. 152 pedagogical personnel could pass to the next stage. Next stage of the competition will be completed at the end of January.

It was started to pay relevant monthly advance allocations for economy purposes to the principals of general education schools subordinated to the Baku city Education Department since December 2013. Amount of monthly advance allocations was defined as 400 manats for schools of which the number of pupils is under 1000, 500 for schools with 1000-1300 pupils and 600 for schools with over 1300 pupils. Monthly allocations will be spent by the principals for the solution of pending urgent issues of the schools.

On October 24, 2013 Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, signed another document considering progressive reforms in educational sphere. This document is a decree on approval of the "State Strategy for the development of education in the Republic of Azerbaijan" describing the fundamental solution of issues which are under public concern. The State Strategy is a conceptual document towards systematized maintenance of educational reforms and high contributions to the country's development. A work group has been established at the Ministry of Education in order to draft the action plan for the implementation of State Strategy.

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One of the updates in 2013 educational sphere is an announcement of key priorities of reforms to be carried out in general education schools. Identification of the priorities aims to implement the key goals set forth in the "State Strategy for the development of education in the Republic of Azerbaijan" and to conduct public awareness. Main objective of reform-oriented events towards the solution of topical problems of general education system was to provide healthy and efficient educational environment at schools, improve education quality and raise the school management up to the modern requirements.

On December 14, 2013 the Ministry of Education organized the Azerbaijani teachers' XIV congress. Government officials, deputies, heads of first vocational special, secondary special and high education establishments, heads of local educational entities, influential teachers, intellectuals and other concerning entities were participating in the congress where representatives of all Azerbaijan regions take part in.

The Ministry of Education made a decision on regulation of issues regarding use of incomes from publication of textbooks for the sale purposes. This decision aims to protect the textbook authors' rights, their motivation to prepare the textbooks meeting modern requirements, as well as provide the promotion of textbook writing. So, textbook authors will get 50% of earnings from additional publication of textbooks. Other part of mentioned earnings will be spent for stimulation of textbook writing, study and use of the existing international practice in this sphere.

By Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated on December 27, 2013, the maximum limit of weekly workload for teachers of general education schools, gymnasium and lyceums, vocational schools and lyceums, sports and art schools, heads of circles at extracurricular education establishments was extended from 24 hours up to 36 hours.

This year the Ministry of Education made a new policy towards the establishment of more efficient relations with mass media. This policy enabled the Ministry to make clearer, transparent and effective relationships with media. In order to publish exact and complete information on activities of the Ministry of Education and increase the cooperation opportunities with media, this year seminars and briefings have been organized for mass media representatives, the trip to Ismayilli region been arranged. Meanwhile, certain attempts have been made towards the strengthening of activities of publishing entities subordinated to the Ministry of Education and useful collaboration with publishing entities of universities.